Assessing ASL Development

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VL2 Early Education Longitudinal Study
June 2009

Purpose

- There is a need to develop ASL assessment tools to monitor the success of bilingual deaf education programs and the progress of children acquiring signed language
- Few commercially available assessment measures exist (Singleton & Supalla, 2005)
- Teachers often rely on informal descriptive measures to develop teaching goals and monitor progress

Outline

- Present findings from pilot study adapting the Assessing British Sign Language Development: Receptive Skills Test (Herman, Holmes & Woll, 1999) for use in ASL
- Present proposal for adapting the Assessing British Sign Language Development: Production Test (Herman, et. al, 2009) for use in ASL

Assessing BSL: Receptive Skills Test

- Typical receptive language task - child views video recording of signed phrase/sentence and selects appropriate picture from a choice of 3 or 4
- Assesses children aged 3 - 12 years (converts raw scores to standard score)
- Includes vocabulary pretest, 3 practice items, and 40 test items
- Tests 6 grammatical categories: spatial verb morphology, number/distribution, negation, size/shape specifiers, noun/verb distinctions, handling classifiers
TEST ADAPTATION

1. Consultation with ASL linguists and ASL native signers to determine suitability and revisions needed for each test item and need for developing new test items.
2. Development of new test items.
3. Redrawing of test images to reflect new items and revise culturally inappropriate images.
4. Recording of a new test tape/dvd in ASL.

SAMPLE OF ADAPTED ASL TEST VIDEO
Step 5: Pilot Testing

- Currently have tested 47 children between ages 4 and 13 years
- Included both Canadian and American children in the sample
- Test is easy to administer and takes approximately 15 minutes for each student to complete
- No repetition of items allowed except for younger children (3 - 5 years)

Step 6: Item Analysis

- 17 items require no change
- 11 items require revisions to distracter pictures
- 8 items require revisions to both pictures and signed stimulus
- 4 items require revisions to signed stimulus

Relationship between Raw Score and Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th># OF CHILDREN</th>
<th>MEAN RAW SCORE (41)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 yrs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 yrs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 yrs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 &amp; 8 yrs</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 yrs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 &amp; 11 yrs</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 &amp; 13 yrs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Future Steps

- Complete required revisions
- Re-pilot test on minimum of 30 children
- Produce finalized version of test
- Standardization of test on a larger sample (minimum of 150 children) to develop norms by age
- Adaptation of Assessing BSL Development: Production Test
ASSESSING BSL: Production Test

- Children view a language-free story on video and are asked to re-tell it to someone who hasn’t seen it.
- Children’s version of the story is videotaped and analyzed in 3 areas:
  - Narrative content
  - Narrative structure
  - BSL Grammar
- Test Scorers must be trained and certified before administering test.

STEPS FOR ADAPTING BSL Production Test

1. Adapt current score sheet for ASL grammatical features (narrative content and narrative structure remain the same).
2. Create second version of the test to allow for re-testing of students:
   - Create a new story
   - Videotape story enactment
   - Pilot with minimum of 12 deaf adults and extract only what is common to all of their re-tellings as episodes for the test
   - Develop the guidelines for narrative content, narrative structure, and ASL grammar.

ADAPTATION (Con’t)

4. Pilot adapted and new test versions on a sample of typically developing native signers within the recommended age range 4 – 12 years (probably at least 40 children) to determine effectiveness and reliability of scoring guidelines.
5. Analysis of pilot testing and make necessary revisions.
6. Standardization on a larger sample to develop norms by age (combine with Receptive Test standardization).

REFERENCES


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